

**RHODODENDRON**

**JUNGLE**

**THE STORY OF  
WEST VIRGINIA  
INDIANS**



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The Indian was a born conservationist!

He needed no training. His theory was that the earth was lent to man for the brief span of his lifetime. He also believed that he should leave it in good shape for his children. The Indians of West Virginia were woodland people with the minimum of superstition and ceremony. There was little hokus-pokus. Their ceremonies were much like the white man's banquet table of today.

**THE RHODODENDRON JUNGLE**

Mother Nature was the Great Grandmother. To her the Indian felt that he owed his allegiance. A brief look back into the time before history began in West Virginia rises of nature.

The West Virginia Indian would not buy or sell land for the same reason we do not buy air. It was free to anyone by right of birth. Any unoccupied mountain or field was free to the establishment of a new village. The Indian followed the abundant game to his home!

When he wanted a tree for a canoe, he took it. But he did not destroy the young trees. When he needed a buffalo or deer for food and leather he took one. But he did not kill more than he needed. For he knew that the deer and the buffalo would always be there for him when his needs returned. Game was abundant in West Virginia as long as the Indian was in charge. It was the white man who taught the Indian to destroy.

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**WEST VIRGINIA -- A WONDERLAND**

To appreciate the wonders of West Virginia and our Wonderland of Forest and Wildlife, it is necessary to know the earliest history of the state.

PRESENTED BY

**THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION OF WEST VIRGINIA**

Today hunters and anglers enjoy the outdoors with the outdoors. A few centuries ago every Indian in West Virginia depended on the forest for a living.

DIVISION OF EDUCATION

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The Rhododendron jungle  
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### THE INDIAN -- AND CONSERVATION

The Indian was a born conservationist!

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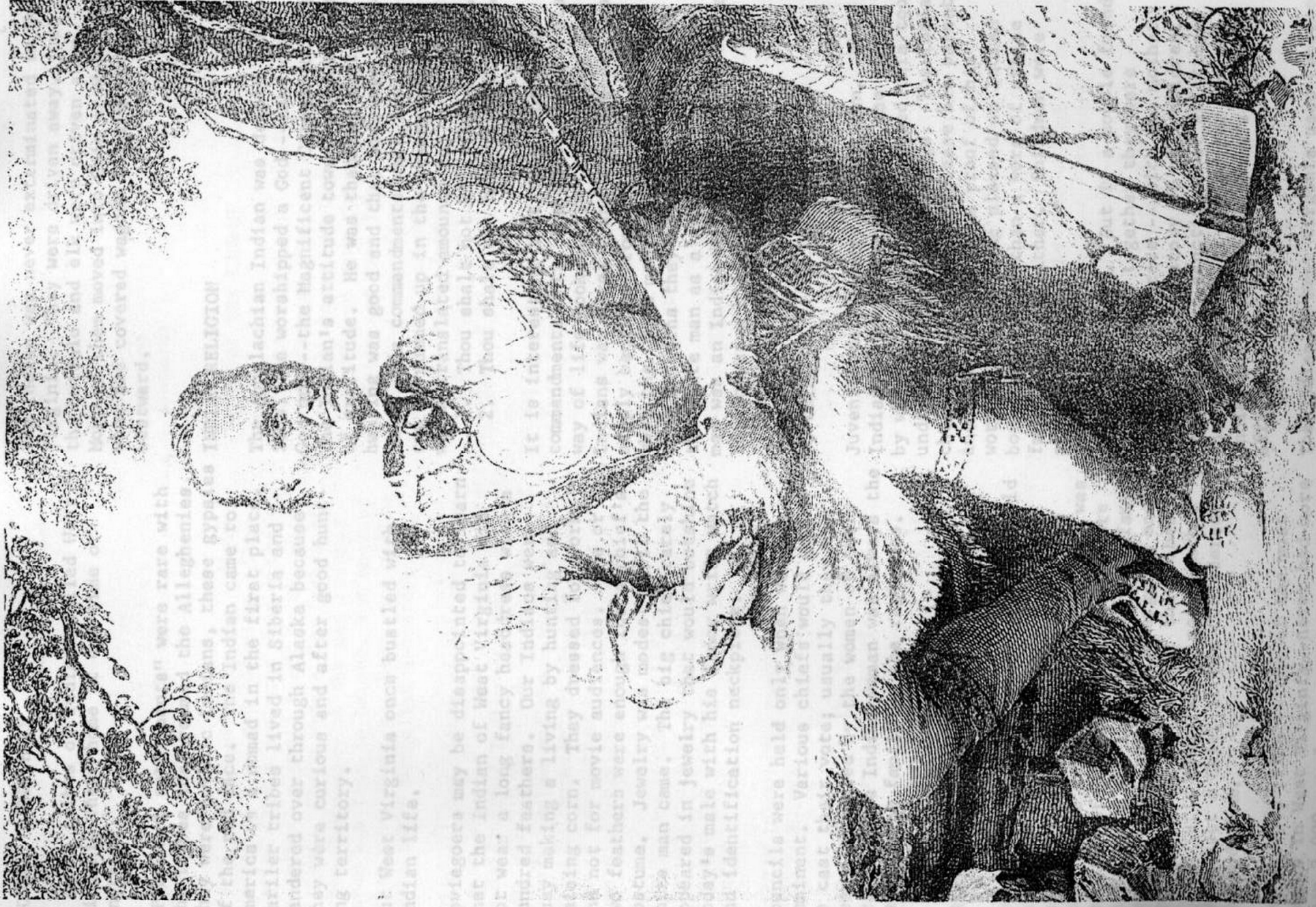
The West Virginia Indian would not buy or sell land for the same reason we do not buy air. It was free to anyone by right of birth. Any unoccupied mountain or field was free to the establishment of a new village. The Indian followed the abundant game -- and there was his home!

When he wanted a tree to build himself a canoe, he took it. But he did not destroy the young trees beside it. When he needed a buffalo or deer for food and leather he took one. But he did not kill more than he needed. For he knew that the deer and the buffalo would always be there for him when his needs returned. Game was abundant in West Virginia as long as the Indian was in charge. It was the white man who taught the Indian to destroy.

### WEST VIRGINIA -- A WONDERLAND

To appreciate the wonders of West Virginia and our Wonderland of Forest and Wildlife, it is necessary to know the earliest history of the state.

Today hunters and fishermen are most intimately familiar with the outdoors. A few centuries ago every living person in West Virginia depended on the forest for a living.



Chief Red Jacket -- a typical Seneca Indian of the type George Washington found in West Virginia when he came into this section to survey lands for the French and Indian soldiers. (Photo-copy by Dave Cruise.)

## DCZEN TRIBES HERE

A dozen tribes of Indians called West Virginia their home at one time or another.

"Permanent settlements" were rare with the tribes that roamed the Alleghenies. They were nomadic Indians, these gypsies of the red race. The Indian came to America as a nomad in the first place. Earlier tribes lived in Siberia and wandered over through Alaska because they were curious and after good hunting territory.

But West Virginia once bustled with Indian life.

Moviegoers may be disappointed to learn that the Indian of West Virginia did not wear a long fancy headdress with a hundred feathers. Our Indians were busy making a living by hunting and raising corn. They dressed for work, and not for movie audiences. One or two feathers were enough for a chief's costume. Jewelry was modest until the white man came. The big chief rarely appeared in jewelry that would outshine today's male with his fancy wrist watch and identification neckpiece.

Councils were held only when war was imminent. Various chiefs would gather to cast their vote; usually they had been instructed by the women of their tribes. The Indian woman was always the head of the family -- the real boss.

## TRIBES WERE SMALL

An average tribe in West Virginia would have from 75 to 150 people. Indians were like bees: when there were too many people in the tribe, a new one was formed. Of course they remained pure in blood -- and these tribes were family groups. A chief was in charge of each group, and in time of war the tribes of a linguistic group would get together and select a Chief of the Confederacy to lead them.

The Shawnee tribe -- one of the most famous in West Virginia--never had more than 2,000 people, according to men who have studied Indian life. Yet they had a powerful influence on the founding of America.

The Indian was never exterminated in West Virginia. They were driven away, just as the buffalo and elk were driven away. Most of them moved into Ohio or Kentucky when the covered wagons began moving westward.

## INDIAN RELIGION

The Appalachian Indian was deeply religious. He worshipped a God -- and one God only--the Magnificent Creator of Life. The Indian's attitude toward God was one of gratitude. He was thankful that the hunting was good and that life was possible. His commandments were few, and can be summed up in the Shawnee code, which translated amounts to:

1. Thou shalt not kill thy neighbor.
2. Thou shalt not harm thy neighbor.

It is interesting that they kept these commandments until the white man and his way of life took over. Crime among the Indians was rare -- and the offender was simply banished from his family. But when the white man came along and told them untruths they no longer considered the white man as a neighbor. The white man was an Indian-killer long before the Indian was a killer of white men.

## NO CRIME

Juvenile delinquency was unknown. The Indian parent did not punish the child by whipping, as they considered this too undignified for human beings. The Indian child always strove to please his parents, and felt that this was proof of his worthiness. Nothing pleased an Indian boy or girl more than a word of praise from Mother or Father. Children were never problems.

Divorce was rare. But if a couple found life unpleasant together they were allowed to separate -- with the mother always having custody of the children. Remarriage was sanctioned at all times. There was no social stigma nor did the Indian pry into his neighbor's private affairs.

The Indian of West Virginia used tobacco-- but did not have the habit. It was an evening pastime, generally, and he would fill his pipe with dry leaves for a few

(more)

No Crime (cont'd)

puffs. The Indian knew how to make wine, but did not become wine-drinkers. They needed their faculties in the wilderness.

#### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

As with white nations, the Indians varied in size and coloring. They varied from a sunburnt near-white to an almost negroid black in the many tribes. There were a few tribes of them where many of the men reached over six feet in height, but most of them were shorter. Many were yellow like their Mongolian ancestors.

They all had plenty of hair on their heads, usually a shiny black and straight. A bald headed Indian was rare, and this was usually due to disease. They had sparse beards and their body hair was slight. As with all Mongols, Indian babies were often born with dark purple spots on their backs.

The Indian length of life compares with the white man's, although many have reached the 100-year mark in recent years.

#### INDIAN LINGUISTIC GROUPS IN WEST VIRGINIA

The Algonkin and the Iroquois groups were prevalent in West Virginia.

The Algonkin claimed most of the land from the East Coast to the Mississippi River, from the Canadian line to Virginia.

The Iroquois claimed New York, Pennsylvania and most of the Great Lakes section. Some of the Iroquois, such as the Cherokees, scattered to the south. Both the above were Woodland Indians, slenderer and taller than Indians of other sections of America.

Before the advent of the white man, the Iroquois had come up from the southland to take much of the Algonkin territory. In West Virginia the two groups included these (and other minor tribes at various times):

#### ALGONKIN group

Algonkin  
Delaware  
Mohican  
Miami  
Shawnee  
Powhatan

#### IROQUOIS group

Cayuga  
Cherokee  
Seneca  
Sesquehanna  
Wyandot

#### FOOD OF THE INDIAN

Indians raised much of their food in gardens near their villages. Corn, squash, beans, sunflowers, pumpkins and tobacco were the main crops. Berries and nuts from the forests were regular foodstuffs for them and they usually kept plenty of wild meat on hand. Bear, deer, elk, bison, rabbit, wild turkeys and upland birds could be obtained at all times.

Maple syrup helped appease their cravings for sweets -- and they learned to make bread and cakes from such fruits as persimmons.

#### HOW THEY BUILT THEIR HOMES

The teepee was rare in West Virginia. The Indians of our mountains usually built houses and lean-tos. Trees were brought down by burning them at the base after packing wet mud around the log so that the entire tree would not be destroyed. Branches and smaller trees were woven into the framework and skins of large animals were used for covering. Basswood strips and bark were often used in tying the house together. A hole was left in the roof for the smoke of their cooking fires.

Basswood strips, smashed from the log with clubs, were also useful in making baskets and items of furniture needed in the simple house-hold.

Clothing was usually of tanned deer-skin.

#### WHERE ARE THEY NOW??

When they were driven from West Virginia, most of the tribes moved to the west with the buffalo and elk--ahead of the white man's guns and swords.  
(more)

Where are They Now? (cont'd)

The Shamnees went on to reservations in the Indian territory with the Cherokees, alongside the Seneca and Wyandot. The other tribesmen were separated and put in enclosures in various states. Some withered away and died of broken hearts, while others adjusted themselves to the concentration encampments and lived as the white man told them to live. Many starved to death or died of disease due to lack of sanitation and overcrowding. Many escaped and went to Canada and freedom. Others broke from their reservations and joined outlaw gangs to rob and harass the white settlers. As late as 1885 they were still killing white settlers in Texas and the southwest.

Today there is no longer Indian trouble in the United States. They have learned that the white man is here to stay -- and that their role is to be the defeated. Many of their young men fought gloriously in both World Wars.

#### HOW THEY HUNTED AND FISHED IN WEST VIRGINIA

Deer, bear, elk and buffalo were the standard meats for the West Virginia Indian. Other smaller game such as rabbits, wild turkey, raccoon and squirrels were also prized as delicacies for their ancient outdoor kitchens.

In season, they loved berries and nuts from the forests. And along the riverbanks in the deep valleys they raised some corn and other grains.

The chief weapon was the bow and arrow -- although they were clever trappers. They devised clever deadfalls and log traps for the bear. And they knew how to drive a deer herd off a cliff to destruction. Sometimes they would drop from trees on to the back of the deer, and kill them with their stone hatchets. They were also skilled with the use of the spear and harpoon. They knew how to fashion barbs from hickory and ironwood so that they could catch fish by torchlight from the West Virginia streams and rivers.

They dug pits for the bear and buffalo, covering them so that no sign could be observed by even the wisest animal.

When these beasts fell into the pits, they would be speared to death.

They also knew how to make fish traps along the streams so that the women could go each day to get fresh food for the table.

During good hunting seasons the Indians did well. But when game was elusive and hard to get they almost starved. Then they would even eat bark from trees to survive. Many of the skeletons dug from ancient Indian graveyards clearly indicate that the Indians' teeth were completely worn out by the time they were of old age.

#### WHAT HAPPENED IN WEST VIRGINIA BEFORE THE WHITE MAN CAME HERE?

##### THE CLAM SHELL PEOPLE

Many history books now being used in West Virginia staunchly assert that this state was the homeland of no Indian tribes -- that it was simply a hilly hunting ground where expeditions came for game.

Nothing could be farther from the truth.

There were people living in West Virginia constantly for a known 8,000 years -- maybe longer. These were the American Indians and their ancestors. When the Crusades were fought there was a fairly well developed civilization in the Mountain State. People were living in the Ohio and Kanawha valleys before the pyramids of Egypt were built. This state was well populated during the days of King David and Solomon.

Actually, our history books cover probably only three per cent of the time man has been involved as an inhabitant of West Virginia. Man first came here from migrations out of Mongolia, across the Bering Strait. Down through Alaska and Canada he came, finally reaching the Mississippi River. Man has always found living easier along the river.

(more)

## The Giam Shell People (cont'd)

And since these Mongols were wandering men, they naturally explored farther and farther until they came to the Ohio River. From this valley they made their way into what is now West Virginia, via the Ohio and Kanawha rivers.

Rivers make transportation and direction easier. At the river bank big game gathered for the lush grasses and substantial supply of drinking water. These first men were hunters -- mighty hunters. Buffalo and elk were abundant along the rivers and they were easy to kill. In the first journals of Englishmen who explored in West Virginia it is said that buffalo and elk were simply curious when approached by man. They had not learned to flee before the firearms, and did not yet realize that humans were bent upon their extinction. It was this lack of caution that made it possible for the first hunters to get at their game at close quarters and drive their spears to the kill. If big game had been as wild then as it is now, these hunters would have probably starved to death.

This primitive man found hunting good in the valleys of the state. Armed with a flint-tipped wooden spear (the bow and arrow had not yet been devised here) a group of hunters could easily down a buffalo bull weighing a ton -- and their families could feast for days on the carcass. The skins were valuable as coverings for their stick houses and for clothing. Buffalo robes were also used to camouflage the hunter, as the big animal was one of the most stupid of earth's creatures. Bedecked in a buffalo skin, the hunter could move among the herd at ease without causing alarm. The animal would stand and watch curiously as the killer selected a choice beef and downed it with a series of thrusts from his weapon.

Along the river, too, fishing provided an easy method of feeding these aboriginal families. Gradually the hunters learned that living was easier when the fishing was good because it did not take as much effort, and because it was always a dependable source of foods. The first West Virginians began to build little huts and stay in good fishing territories for

several years at a time. Actually, they were beginning to be family men.

Their skill in fishing improved and they became adept with their primitive nets, harpoons and traps. Many of the sites of their camps have been unearthed in the past few years, showing that catfish from the Ohio River were a definite item of daily diet.

When the first hunters came to West Virginia they hunted many animals which today are extinct. Giant elephants (mammoths and mastadons) were not uncommon. Wild horses and camels were here, as were sabre-toothed tigers. The ground sloth and peccary (wild pig) were abundant. Remains of all these forms of ancient wildlife have been uncovered in West Virginia by amateur and professional archeologists.

Only small game lived in the deeper forests, so man did not need to go to the big woods for his food. Virgin forests are so dark that vegetation for grass and brush eating animals is rare. There are ten times more deer in the West Virginia hills today than there were in the days of the Paleo-Indian who first came here, because man has destroyed the virgin forests and small hardwood brush shoots are within easy reach.

Living in those days wasn't difficult, though. In the summertime the fishing was always good. The general atmosphere was much damper in those days and rainfall was more constant. The rivers were filled with clams and fish that were accessible. The human diet could also be supplemented with nuts and berries from the adjacent mountains.

This clam-eating man, the Paleo and Archaic Indian, lived here until about 1000 B.C., when the early woodland Indian took over and began building mounds that are visible today.

## THE MOUND BUILDERS

The bloodlines of the people who lived in West Virginia since the first yellowish Mongol put a foot on Mountain State soil were kept pretty much intact for 5,000 years.

(more)



actually, the original Mongol blood was exactly the same strain that runs today in the veins of the Hindus, Chinese and Japanese people. Living conditions and general climate have caused the differences in size and color, with the result that American Mongols (called Indians) were a red race, while his Asiatic counterpart is yellow of complexion. However, all these Mongol descendants share a tendency to have little or no beard and coarse black hair. Even today it is remarkable that natives of the mountain country in Tibet closely resemble the American Indian. Only a scholar could tell an American and Tibetan Mongol if they were dressed alike. Mongol blood is the seed of more modern races than any other bloodlines.

Physically the West Virginia natives of 100 years ago probably were lighter of color than the white explorers found there by Columbus, Cabot and others. They had eyes, high cheekbones, straight noses and tall race. These were the "island" Indians, as they have always been called. They have all the characteristics of a combination of the Mongol and the white man. Or they think of themselves as the "island" Indians. But man in West Virginia is not any of these things.

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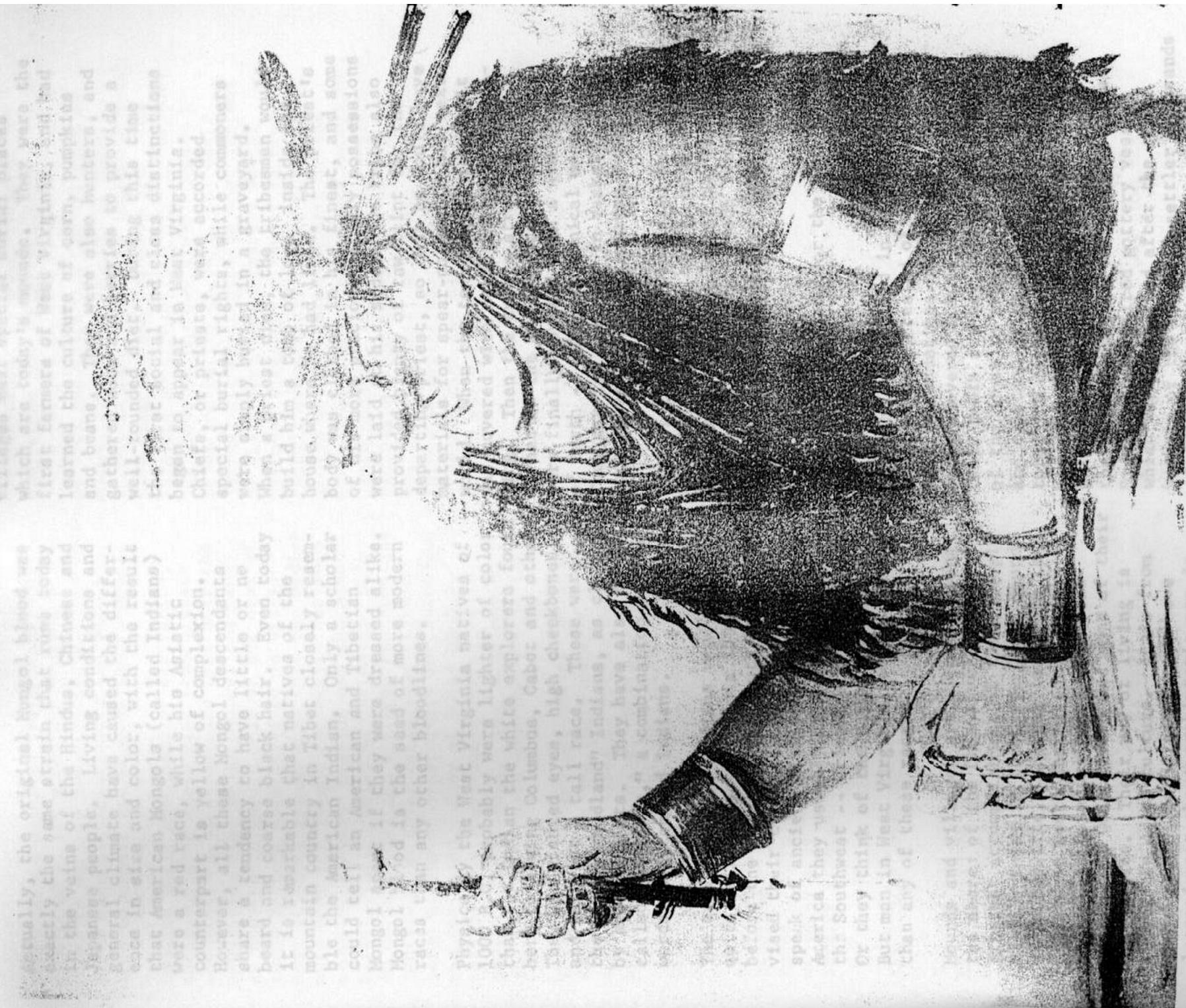
villages and special places which are today's monuments. They were the first farmers of West Virginia and had learned the culture of corn, pumpkins and beans. They were also hunters, and gathered wild game to provide a well-rounded diet. During this time that social and class distinctions began to appear in West Virginia.

Chiefs, or priests, were accorded special burial rights, while commoners were usually buried in a graveyard. When a priest died, the tribesman would build him a tomb or a special burial house, which was a place of honor. The body was laid out in a chest, and some of the possessions were laid out with it. The priest also provided a feast, so that the water for spears, arrows, and bows was also provided.

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Typical Shawnee Indian was TENSKWATAYIA - "The Open Door." He was also called the "Shawnee Prophet" and was a brother to Tecumseh, the great Shawnee Chief. This chief frequently hunted and fought in West Virginia. He is shown in painting made in 1832. (Photo: Smithsonian Institution)



## The Mound Builders (cont'd)

Actually, the original Mongol blood was exactly the same strain that runs today in the veins of the Hindus, Chinese and Japanese people. Living conditions and general climate have caused the difference in size and color, with the result that American Mongols (called Indians) were a red race, while his Asiatic counterpart is yellow of complexion. However, all these Mongol descendants share a tendency to have little or no beard and coarse black hair. Even today it is remarkable that natives of the mountain country in Tibet closely resemble the American Indian. Only a scholar could tell an American and Tibetan Mongol apart if they were dressed alike. Mongol blood is the seed of more modern races than any other bloodlines.

Physically the West Virginia natives of 1000 B.C. probably were lighter of color than the Indian the white explorers found here following Columbus, Cabot and others. They had slanted eyes, high cheekbones, and were not a tall race. These were the "early woodland" Indians, as classed by archeologists. They have also been called "Amerinds," a combination of the words American and Indians.

The early woodland Indians were doing quite well in West Virginia 1500 years before the Incas of the South had devised their civilization. When people speak of ancient civilizations in America they usually think in terms of the Southwest -- Arizona and New Mexico. Or they think of the Mayas and Aztecs. But man in West Virginia is much older than any of these races.

Mounds and villages are abundant along the shores of the Ohio River. The greatest accomplishment of these people visible today is the Grave Creek Mound at Moundsville. Another large one is located in South Charleston. Lesser mounds are found all along both the Kanawha and Ohio rivers and some of their tributaries. Their way of living is called the Adena culture. It is from these mounds (burials) that we have learned most about prehistoric man in the Mountain State.

These Mound Builders lived in small villages near special burial places which are today's mounds. They were the first farmers of West Virginia, and had learned the culture of corn, pumpkins and beans. They were also hunters, and gathered nuts and berries to provide a well-rounded diet. During this time the first social and class distinctions began to appear in West Virginia.

Chiefs, or priests, were accorded special burial rights, while commoners were simply buried in a graveyard. When a priest died, the tribesmen would build him a tomb of logs inside the house where he had lived. The priest's body was clothed in his finest, and some of his more precious worldly possessions were laid at his side. The tribe also provided plenty of raw flint for the departing priest, so that he would have materials for spear-points in his next world. When the tomb was finished, it was covered with earth inside the dwelling. Then the entire structure was burned to the ground, when the remains were finally covered with a new layer of earth -- making a conical mound. They carried the dirt in baskets, and each funeral must have taken weeks.

Many of the mounds were used for several burials -- and some of the bodies were even cremated. The larger mounds contain remains from many such funerals, and cover periods of more than one generation.

This was the reason for the West Virginia mounds.

Mound Builders lived in well-built but small houses, created of saplings and bark, or sometimes animal skins. They had discovered how to make shingles for their roofs and how to slant the walls of the house to protect it from storms and constant rains. From their ancestors, the migrant Mongols of Asia, they had kept the idea of making and using pottery in the household. They were the first people in the Eastern United States to use fired pottery vessels which were patterned after the stone vessels of the original settler thousands of years before.

## The Village People (cont'd)

These people occupied their houses for generations, and sometimes would add rooms to enlarge the structures. Previously no West Virginia native had done so much to repair and keep up their homes.

Despite their knowledge of sanitation, their juvenile death rate from disease was high. Graves indicate that half the population died as juveniles, and many as newborn infants. Only 39 per cent of these Indians ever lived to maturity. Most of these graves show that the bodies were bent and flexed for burial for some peculiar reason. Disease was the great killer, their skeletons indicate. Life in closely confined villages and constant contact with their fellow-man allowed germs plenty of opportunity for infection and contagion. Many of these people, particularly women and children, were physically deformed. They were paying the price for their newfound social life.

These people became experts at the manufacture of pipes for their tobacco. They made them into shapes of birds, animals and religious symbols. There is much yet to be learned of this interesting period in West Virginia's history. This state has as yet failed to set up a Department of Archeology, and as a result all discoveries have come from scientists financed by other states and private funds. There is no official state research on early life in this state -- and our lack of information is a clear-cut result.

## THE INDIAN INVADERS

The village-dwelling farmer disappeared from the scene in West Virginia in about 1600 A.D. when effects of European contacts from the East were first being felt. A few descendants of this pre-historic Indian still exist as Cornplanter Senecas in Pennsylvania and New York today.

At this time Delaware, Shawnee and Iroquois Indians were moving in on this state, and were to remain here until they were driven before the white man's firearm and plow. These are the first Indians about whom we have written historical accounts. George Washington wrote in his journal that he met many Delawares along the Ohio River

as he floated from Wheeling down to Point Pleasant in quest of lands for his French and Indian soldiers.

By 1700 the white man had not made an actual appearance in West Virginia except in rare exploring incidents which were unmapped and vaguely told. The Virginia government had sent an exploring group up the New River, headed by Batts and Fallam in 1671, but their journal clearly indicates that the end of their bewildered journey was at Narrows, Virginia, a few miles from today's state line. Their Shenandoah Indian guides wanted no part of the mysterious country beyond the mountains. James Needham, an adventuring Englishman, had beaten them there by a few years and these official explorers were disturbed to notice that wherever they ventured that the old explorer had carved his name on trees.

It is believed that the village-dwelling farmer of West Virginia was driven out by the Senecas in the 17th Century. The white man's diseases had also made way into West Virginia, as is indicated by the condition of some of their remains. Never having been exposed to diseases, the Indian had no resistance. Smallpox and cholera were almost universally fatal. Social diseases were also quick to kill. The white man's vanguard was his germs, sent ahead of him to weaken the enemy for conquest.

The Senecas who pushed out the village farmers were one of the original Five Nations of Iroquois of New York. The Dutch settlers called them Sinnekas, which was adapted to Seneca by English. Of the Five Nations only the Senecas joined Pontiac in his war against the British in 1763. During the Revolution they sided with the British against the Colonists.

After their dispersal in the north, following a series of wars, some of them moved into West Virginia. They were an intelligent people, and produced Chief Cornplanter, Chief Red Jacket, and others of national fame. These Senecas spread over the state in family groups, and were not too important in later history since they frequently blended in with the other stronger tribes here-- the Delawares and Shawnees.

### The Indian Invaders (cont'd)

The Delawares were probably the strongest nation of late Indians to inhabit West Virginia for any real length of time. They established family life and were predominant in about any section of the state they chose. They were the remains of a bold and daring tribe from the territories of Delaware and Pennsylvania. In about 1616 the Dutch began trading with them and before long had traded them out of their lands and rights. William Penn bought large tracts from them in Pennsylvania, and when the Delawares protested they were defrauded, other tribes drove them out in Penn's favor. William Penn was one of the few white leaders who ever kept his word and the loyalty of several tribes was the result. By 1776 they had fled, many of them to the mountains of the Alleghenies, and their power as an Eastern tribe was forever broken. In 1789, by a treaty, they were given land in Ohio -- but a few years later the government ordered them on the move again. Of this once great tribe, only 1,800 members survived to 1885. During the Civil War they furnished 170 soldiers to the Union.

Another West Virginia tribe was the Munsees, of Delaware blood. This group furnished many of the bravest soldiers who fought under King Cornstalk in the Shawnee Confederacy.

The Iroquoian group of Indians in West Virginia included the Cayugas and Senecas. The Cayugas produced Chief John Logan, probably the most brilliant orator of Indian history. The Wyandots were also of this group. The Cherokees visited and lived in remote sections of the state but at no time were a dominant factor in Indian life in West Virginia.

The Mingos were often called Senecas, and liked to live close to the Shawnees. The word "Mingo" meant stealthy, which was a good description of their hunting and fighting tactics. They preferred the Shawnees to their Iroquois cousins -- and many joined up with the Shawnee tribes.

The Shawnees were called the "Arabs of the New World" because of their habits of wandering over the continent. They wrote their names in blood across the

map of West Virginia. Unlike the Iroquois, they refused to sell an acre of land or give an inch without battle. This tribe was first heard of when the original Shawnees lived with the Delawares in the north, but after a domestic dispute they moved into Virginia and Tennessee, many of them settling in the mountains of West Virginia, particularly along the Kanawha and New River valleys. They took part in Pontiac's war and sided with the British in the Revolution. Coming to West Virginia in about 1720, they scared most other tribes out of their territory and took over. They fought a 40-year war with the white man, and proclaimed that they killed ten white men for every red warrior who bit the dust. But this was not good enough.

At their peak, this furious tribe never numbered more than 2,500 members. They were eventually driven westward and southward into oblivion. The white man then took over in West Virginia.

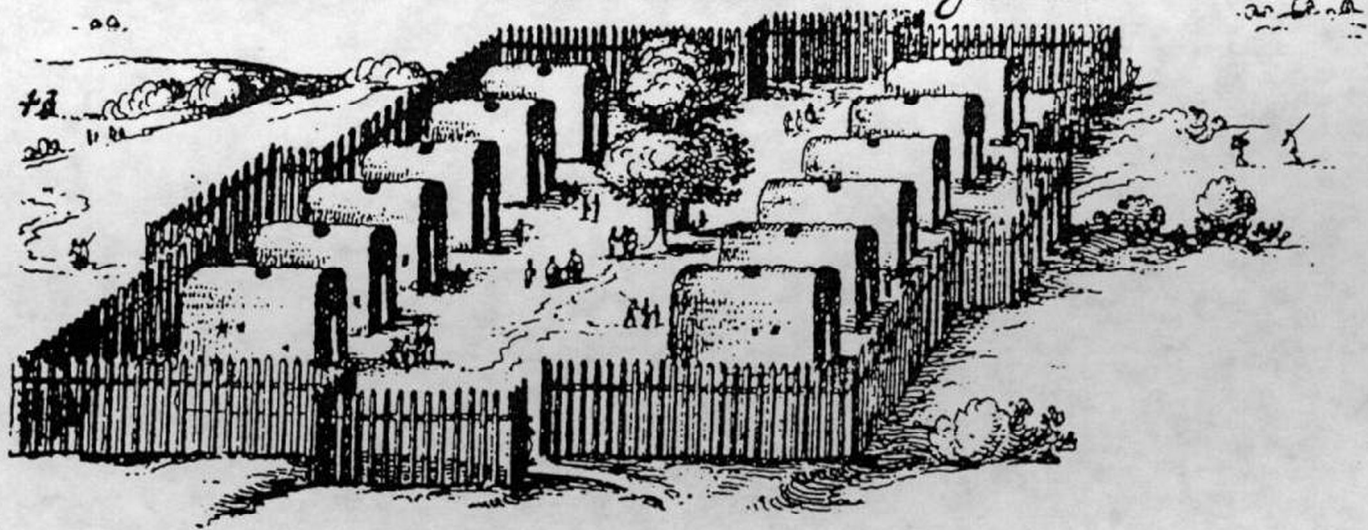
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## SOURCES

This brochure on the West Virginia Indian and Prehistoric Man is presented by the Conservation Commission of West Virginia as basic information on our former inhabitants -- for camp instructors, etc. We are indebted to the Library of History and Archives; John Collier's Indians of the Americas; Dr. William Mayer-Oakes of Carnegie Museum; Smithsonian Institution. We believe these facts are the authentic ones that have been developed to date.

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Modus muniendi apud Mahikanenses  
*Maniere van Woonplaetsen ofte Dorpen der Mahicans  
ende andre Natien haer geburen*



In 1651 Indians built villages like this. No wig-wams were used in West Virginia. Houses were constructed of saplings and bark -- sometimes animals skins. This is a Mohican Village, and there was such a camp at Kanawha Falls when first white explorers visited West Virginia.

The Indian was a born conservationist.

He needed no training. His theory was that the earth was lent to man for the brief span of his lifetime. He also believed that he should leave it in good shape for his children. The Indians of West Virginia were woodland people with the minimum of superstition and ceremony. There was little hokus-fokus. Their ceremonies were much like the white man's pagan rites of today. Mather Nature was the Great Grandmother. To her the Indian felt that he owed his allegiance, and he taught his children conservation of the bounty of nature.

The West Virginia Indian would not buy or sell land for the same reason we do not buy air. It was free to anyone by right of birth. Any unoccupied mountain or field was free to the establishment of a new village. The Indian followed the abundant game -- and there was his home! When he wanted a tree to build himself a canoe, he took it. But he did not destroy the young trees beside it. When he needed a buffalo or deer for food and leather he took one. But he did not kill more than he needed. For he knew that the deer and the buffalo would always be there for him when his needs returned. Game was abundant in West Virginia as long as the Indian was in charge. It was the white man who taught the Indian to destroy.

WEST VIRGINIA -- A WOODLAND

To appreciate the wonders of West Virginia and our Woodland of forest and wildlife, it is necessary to know the earliest history of the state. Today hunters and fishermen are most intimately familiar with the outdoors. A few centuries ago every living person in West Virginia depended on the forest for a living.

Despite man's carelessness with the axe and plow, we still have ten million acres of forests. And man's instincts still lead him back to the field and hillside for game. Or to the rivers and streams for fish.

There's a lot of romance on these ten million acres. Deer and bear are still with us. The raccoon and possum are to be hunted at night to the wail of tree dogs. And other game and good fishing.

The Conservation Commission believes that a look into the past will give you a little more appreciation of the Wonderland of the Outdoors. This brochure deals with the Indian who lived here before 1800 -- the ghosts of strong men who loved these hills with such a passion that they willingly died rather than surrender. Just as West Virginians would fight to the death against a foreign invader today.

We take no credit from our valiant ancestors who settled here. They were men hunting homes for their families. Such names as Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark and George Washington will always be honored as the men who made today's West Virginia possible.

But the Indians had their troubles too.

Some 25,000 years ago the first Amerind set his bare foot upon the Continent of North America. He was the forerunner of one of the noblest races ever known to man. From the cold plains of Northern Asia they came -- these first Americans. They carried stone hatchets but had not yet devised the bow and arrow. Some descendants were to drift to West Virginia.

They crossed the Bering Strait on foot because the seas had not yet washed out the land that connected Asia and the Americas.

Today Mongols are still crossing the Bering Strait in migration. If civilization in America were to be suddenly destroyed in some catastrophe, the cycle would begin once more. For these untutored Mongols and offspring have learned one thing we may not know: they know how to survive. And once again we would have American Indians hunting game in the Hills of West Virginia, springing from these wandering Mongols of the North. They are the seed of more of the world's people than any other race.